

Green Eyes

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Disclaimer: I don't own any characters or events or plot related to the _How To Train Your Dragon_ franchise.

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><p>i.

Astrid Hofferson is terrified.

Her breath short, gasping for air as she runs runsruns_runs _tripping and breaking the foliage, hop the fallen branch, chop the bush in front of you, escape, quick, _before it catches you_.

Astrid's read the book thousands of times, more than anyone, more than Fishlegs, but she's forgotten the most important detail. She remembers, only after she's already swung the axe at the Night Fury's snout and heard its distinct screech.

_Never engage this dragon. _

Hide, hide and pray it does not find you.

She feels tears gathering at the corners of her eyes " the wind is moving northeast, if she just follows the current it won't smell her fear " her lungs exerting themselves, the knife is shaking and now it's on the grass, when did she fall? Get up _getup_ don't stop running "

(She doesn't care about the village right now. Or Hiccup. First, she needs to stay alive, and then she'll tell them all about his betrayal and his devil of a partner and how it was all a trick. They'll be killed, both of them and then she'll finally be chosen to kill the Monstrous Nightmare and everything will be all right.

She just needs to _stay alive_.)

There's a log right in front, just jump it and hide behind it, below it, stay quiet and it won't hear you "

Then there is no ground beneath her and she chokes on the collar of her shirt, her stomach plummets to the depths of her gut and Astrid is going up up _up _"

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><p>ii.

Since she was five years old, the Hoffersons have faced countless of monsters. Gronkles, Deadly Nadders, Monstrous Nightmares even, and not once has she been paralyzed by fear. The heat of the battle has always called for her; she's loved it and understood it since she was a baby. It was her birthplace and it will, she knows, be her deathbed.

Now, staring up at the face of the one boy she has never understood, feeling the stench of the Night Fury's breath in her nostrils, her body screaming from the exertion of holding on to the branch " she's going to fall, to die die_ die _and the last thing she's going to see and feel is _the devil growling _by her side " she has never felt smaller.

She doesn't understand, doesn't want to understand because Odin, it was never meant to be this way. She should be preparing for the final exam she should have won, sharpening her mother's axe and polishing her armor.

Not hanging for dear life by a branch on the tallest tree in the whole of Berk, petrified by the beast in front of her.

"Hiccup, get me down from here!" Her foot slips and her heart stops when she feels her grip loosen (Don't fall, don't fall_don'tfall_")

"You have to give me a chance to explain!" She barely makes sense of his words, and Thor, why does he have to look so comfortable on top of that thing? This is not right, he's a Viking, he's supposed to kill dragons not tame them!

But Astrid's life is hanging by a thread and she doesn't trust Hiccup, not now and maybe not ever. If she tried to go down by herself, who knows what they'd do to her " she'll either die from

the fall or get killed by the dragon. So she complies and stumbles on to the Night Fury - whatever happens, she can stab him in the back.

He's a traitor now, and that's how she will treat him. Nothing more.

(He was also her friend, back when they weren't expected to fight dragons, when they were too little for him to feel alienated and when they didn't know that different, like what Hiccup was, meant wrong.

But she can't think about that now. He's riding a dragon, a Night Fury, and he's never been more of a stranger in her eyes.)

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><p>iii.

She can't distinguish left from right, up from down, her gut is pounding, her heart is clenching or the other way around, she doesn't know! Her lunch wants to escape her, she's crying because she feels the tears running down her face " but they're going up now, or is she just upside down? " she feels the moment her arms detach her from Hiccup and she screams.

She wants her father, and it hurts that he abandoned them or he's lost, or dead "

and it doesn't make a fucking difference.

This, Astrid thinks, feeling one of the beasts she's trained so hard to kill shake her like a rag doll and plunge her to the sea, is what death feels like.

"Stop, please, I'M SORRY JUST PLEASE, STOP!" She's sobbing and the wind cuts through her arms and scares her with its terrible cacophony around her and then there's

Silence.

At some point, Hiccup tells her to open her eyes; so quietly she almost doesn't hear him. The colors that greet her feel like a welcome home, like a lullaby: There, there, don't cry, it's all going to be better now. _

Berk is so beautiful, she thinks, as she places her chin on his shoulder.

(And she must be in shock, because her hands are beginning to tremble, but she'll deal with the trauma later.)

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><p>iv.

Red. It's all Astrid can think of as she stares at the colossal creature that just ate a Gronckle whole.

They need to get out of there now.

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><p>And

iv.

"Let's find your dad."

Hiccup's resounding "_NO!"_ stops her cold. She doesn't understand, she still doesn't _get it_ and her arms have started shaking again. To her, it is very simple:

Hiccup found the answer to the village's troubles. Now they can go kill the queen and free Berk from the raids and Stoick will be proud of him, can't he _see_?

So what if he loses the Night Fury? It's a pet, she thinks; when they're done with the nest he'll have plenty other dragons to choose from, others which are far less dangerous and far less intimidating.

(Astrid still feels Toothless' stench on her neck, feels the claw marks on her right arm and she still shivers when the dragon purrs as she walks away.

Thor, lend her your strength because even after all of it, one look at those eyes and she's still _terrified_.

She doesn't think Hiccup understands how monstrous his dragon can be.)

"You wanna keep it a secret? To protect your pet dragon, _are you serious_?"

Once upon a time, her tone would have broken him into submission. He would have stuttered, made a small attempt at confrontation and then given up. She expects this.

But, somehow, while no one was looking Hiccup has become as dangerously fierce as his Night Fury. So when she asks him, when she tries to loom over him to make him see reason, his answer terrifies her.

"Yes."

She bends to his will. Mostly because she doesn't know what else to do when he's looking at her with so much strength that she's a little bit proud of him.

(But also because his eyes, Astrid thinks, are the same shade of green as the Night Fury's, and that frightens her more than she'll ever admit.

...It is many months later, when Stormfly executes her first perfect pirouette and Astrid rubs her below the chin and gifts her with a fresh fish, that she finally understands.

She feels it, every time Stormfly flies with her. The magnificent beast could wrench her apart and break her like a chopstick. She

understands it, accepts it; and moves on.

Astrid Hofferson is not afraid anymore. There is no need to be.

She has ripped apart the Dragon Manual in her minds eye, and thrown it to the hearth.)

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â€| _vi_.

Toothless, she knows, is not like Stormfly, or any other dragon in Berk. He is smarter, faster, lighter, stronger and more terrifying than any other. People forget this, because Toothless is gentle. Toothless is _kind_.

But Astrid knows. She felt it the first and only time she confronted Hiccup, in the cove. She felt it when she pushed him onto the ground, felt it when she struggled with him on top of her. Felt it when his Night Fury snarled at her and narrowed his greengreen_green_ eyes at her.

So when Alvin the Treacherous makes the mistake of trying to kidnap Hiccup a second time, she is not surprised when Toothless digs his claws into his skin and wrenches his throat from his neck with his sharp teeth, before swallowing it and looking for his next victim. She's been waiting for this to happen for a long time.

The whole of Berk is horrified, and Stoick is trying to decide whether the Night Fury will be a threat to his village. Hiccup, Astrid is surprised to see, simply looks on, with his greengreen_green_ eyes, while he nurses his wounds.

His master has been wronged, and Toothless will punish them the only way a Night Fury knows how. Hiccup understands this, and he will not stand in his friend's way.

Astrid is alarmed, and creates a makeshift Dragon Manual in her mind while the carnage continues. It has only one entry.

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><p>Addendum: Night Fury

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_If ever confronted by a Night Fury, do not look into their cold eyes. Do not breathe the same air they expel, do not smell their stench or their hunger. _

Close off all of your senses and try not to listen to their snarls and roars because they are thunder and death itself, and they will devour you.

—•—

Their masters are no less terrifying.

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END

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><p>Review please! I would like to know whether I should continue
with HTTYD fanfics :)<p>

Cookies for y'all.

End
file.